

4-23-2014

## Daily Eastern News: April 23, 2014

Eastern Illinois University

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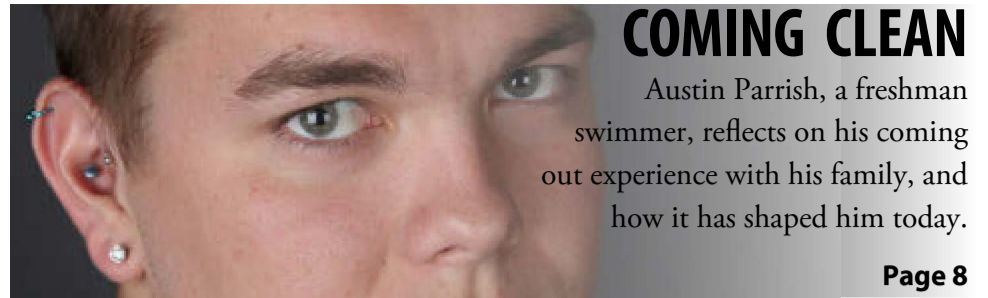
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## SAY WHAT?

Nine students will perform original poetry and compete for scholarships during the second annual Graham Slam Friday.

Page 3



## COMING CLEAN

Austin Parrish, a freshman swimmer, reflects on his coming out experience with his family, and how it has shaped him today.

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# THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

Wednesday, April 23, 2014

"TELL THE TRUTH AND DON'T BE AFRAID"

VOL. 98 | NO. 143

## Thompson Square to bring family dynamic to Eastern

### Country music husband-and-wife duo to perform Thursday for Spring Concert

By Stephanie Markham  
Verge Editor | @DEN\_News

They may be known as a husband-and-wife duo, but when they are on the road, Keifer and Shawna Thompson of the country band Thompson Square have two buses full of crewmembers and a semi truck of stage equipment along with them.

The traveling Thompson Square team includes everyone from the accompanying musicians to songwriters to the couple's two dogs: Edda and Barkley.

Tired from the Bruce Springsteen concert they attended the night before, Shawna and Keifer were just waking up shortly after noon to let the dogs out when they called in for their interview with *The Daily Eastern News*.

"It makes the road a lot easier having (the dogs) out here," Shawna said. "They're awesome stress relievers."

The group had the night off when they stopped in their hometown of Nashville, and Springsteen, a longtime favorite live act, happened to be playing.

While Thompson Square's schedule can be hectic, the band tries to attend as many shows as possible for the learning experience, Shawna said.

"A Bruce show is definitely like going to school because he to me is the epitome of entertainment," she said.

Shawna said she likes Springsteen's energy and the way he incorporates his fans into the performance.

"Every show you can tell maybe he thinks this is going to be the last show of his life," she said. "I mean he leaves it all out on the stage."

She said Thompson Square members try to get the crowd to have a good time by having a good time themselves.

"Just showing the crowd that while we're up there we're doing what we absolutely love to do, I think that's how you get them involved," she said.

Keifer said a Thompson Square show is like a roller coaster.

"We want to take people up, get them up into the mountains and go to the peaks,"



PHOTO COURTESY OF: JOSEPH ANTHONY BAKER

Thompson Square will perform 8 p.m. Thursday in the Lantz Arena. Tickets are \$20 for students.

### SPRING CONCERT- THOMPSON SQUARE

**When:** 8 p.m. Thursday

**Tickets (public):** \$23

**Where:** Lantz Arena

**Tickets (students):** \$20

Tickets are available at the University Union Ticket Office (581-5122) or [universityuniontickets.com](http://universityuniontickets.com).

he said.

He said the band members try to create the same atmosphere they enjoy seeing at a show like Springsteen's.

"Our show is not about fist pumping for an hour and a half," Keifer said. "We really try to pull some emotions out of there."

Some songs are written about fun and partying; some are about love and some are about sadness and loss, Keifer said.

"I don't like to write unless I have something to move me," he said. "I don't want to just make something up."

And while bringing the dogs along for the ride might make things feel more like home, being with one's spouse on tour, in the studio and on stage creates some challenges.

SPRING CONCERT , page 5

## BOT to convene at new venue

Staff Report

The Board of Trustees will be meeting Friday to go over the presidential search committee, along with other items of business.

The board will meet at 1:30 p.m. Friday in the Great Hall of Pemberton Hall.

There is a chance the board will go into executive session at 1:30 p.m., and if that is the case, the open session will convene thereafter.

The board will be discussing the presidential search committee. This is the first time the board will meet after President Bill Perry announced his intent to step down as president of the university when his contract ends in June 2015.

Last time there was a presidential search committee, there was approximately 16 people who served. These members included faculty, staff, community members and a student representative.

The board will also be presented with the program analysis and budget cut recommendations for how to eliminate \$7 million from the overall budget, as well as reallocate \$1 million.

The board will also review pending purchase approvals, which include a telephone service agreement and athletic apparel sponsorship.

An update on how admissions and enrollment are looking going into the summer will also be given.

The board will also vote on a new degree program: Bachelor of Arts Music.

The 2013 fiscal year compliance audit will also be reviewed, as well as an update on the internal auditing.

## Energy center to open Friday

Staff Report

The Center for Clean Energy Research and Education will be opening its doors Friday.

The building, at 5,000-plus-square-feet, will be home to a research facility for hands-on investigations of biomass sources that may be suitable as alternatives or additives to the wood chips being used in Eastern's Renewable Energy Center.

Inside, the facility houses a storage and processing area, room for a laboratory-scale gasifier and an analytical lab.

The center will also have an "Idea Incubator," where outside businesses can meet with students, all based on the foundation of generating ideas on renewable energy endeavors.

The opening will be from 11:30 a.m. until 1 p.m. Friday at the Center for Clean Energy Research and Education, which is next to the Renewable Energy Center.

The Board of Trustees first approved the Center in 2011, with groundbreaking beginning in February 2013.

The estimated \$1 million endeavor was funded through donations and research grants.

## THOMPSON SQUARE



PHOTO COURTESY OF: JOSEPH ANTHONY BAKER

Received awards such as:

- Country Music Award for Vocal Duo of the Year (2012)
- Academy of Country Music Award for Vocal Duo of the Year (2012 and 2013)

Know for hits such as:

- "Are You Gonna Kiss Me Or Not" (2011)
- "I Got You" (2011)
- "If I Didn't Have You" (2013)
- "Everything I Shouldn't Be Thinking About" (2013)

# Local weather

TODAY THURSDAY



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Storms  
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For more weather visit [castle.eiu.edu/weather](http://castle.eiu.edu/weather).

# THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

"Tell the truth and don't be afraid."

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# Cups for cancer



DION MCNEAL | DAILY EASTERN NEWS

Ben Misselhorn, a junior marketing major, involved with RHA's community service committee, sold lemonade outside of Coleman Hall Tuesday afternoon to support childhood cancer. The lemonade sale had two stands set up, one in the library quad and another by Coleman Hall.

# Eastern students to improve community

By Jarad Jarmon  
Associate News Editor | @JJarmonReporter

As the days heat up, students, faculty, and community members alike have to chance to go outside more whether it is biking, running and even community service.

Students will have the ability to participate in a campus-wide community service program Saturday for the 12th annual Panther Service Day. Student can register for a couple of volunteer services that day.

To register for one of the projects Saturday, students must go to the Student

Community Service website.

They can either sign up to help out with Teen Reach or the Mattoon Trash Bash. The deadline to register is at 5 p.m. Friday. Students can also register as a group of six volunteers or more online.

Registered volunteers will need to check-in outside Blair Hall from 11 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Saturday. Before going out, those volunteering will be able to join the cook-off at 11 a.m.

They are looking for more people to help out with the Mattoon Trash Bash, where students travel to sites across the Mattoon area and pick up trash. At the

time of printing, there has only been one has volunteered for the project. There are 33 seats open to help out.

Those interested in volunteering for Teen Reach will be traveling to the local Teen Reach center and helping clean up the center and helping with planting and fixing up the center's summer garden. Students must check-in between 11 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Saturday. At the time of printing there were 13 seats available.

The groups will head out to the various sites for both projects at 11:45 a.m.

The first 200 volunteers to show up will receive a Panther Service Day T-shirt.

Aside from the projects on Saturday, there are other service projects available for students to be a part of on the Student Community Service website including preparing the Whiteside Garden for the summer.

Those interested will be volunteering will be gardening and painting the site. Registration ends at noon Tuesday. They will head to the project site at 1:45 p.m.

Jarad Jarmon can be reached at 581-2812 or [jsjarmon@eiu.edu](mailto:jsjarmon@eiu.edu).

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SPRING AUDITION

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**Theatre Movement Studio**  
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# Students to compete in poetry competition

**Staff Report**

Coming back for the second year now, the Graham Slam will have nine Eastern students perform original poetry.

The Graham Slam will be at 4 p.m. Friday in the Tarble Arts Center Atrium.

The event will decide the winners of the Graham R. Lewis Memorial Poetry Award. Lewis was an instructor in the EIU English Department from 1993 until his death in 2008.

The award was established in 2002 to honor the memory of

Lewis, Dan Tessitore, the event organizer and English professor, said in a press release.

Joe Butler of Chicago, a friend and classmate of Lewis, oversees the award distribution, Tessitore said.

The prize amounts are based on Zeno's Paradoxes, a set of philosophical problems devised by Greek philosopher Zeno of Elea.

First place will receive \$3,360; second place will receive \$1,680; third place will receive \$840; fourth place will receive \$420; fifth place will receive \$210; seventh place, \$52.50; eighth place, \$26.25; and

ninth place, \$13.13.

Tessitore said in the release that Lewis was a philosophy fan and Zeno was his favorite.

"Special consideration shall be given to the awarding of the ninth place prize, as the number 13, doubly represented by the ninth place award, held special significance to Lewis," Tessitore said.

David Busboom, Margorie Clemente and Benjamin Cravens, all English majors, along with English graduate students Trevor Martinson and Steven Nathaniel, Daronte Matthews, a journalism major, Mark Rheame, a graduate stu-

dent in music, Emily Scarbrough, a graduate student in history and Ivory Watts, a communication studies major, are this year's finalists.

Lewis received a bachelor's degree in English from EIU in 1985, and earned a master's degree in creative writing-fiction from Columbia University in Chicago and a master's of fine arts degree in creative writing-poetry from The University of Arkansas.

He received numerous awards, including two Academy of American Poets' Prizes, the Kenneth Patchen Award and two Bread Loaf Writers' Conference Scholarships.

He published a chapbook of poetry entitled "Voices in the Field," and his first book of poetry, "Forever Came Today" was published in 2004. He was also a contributing writer for Asian Cult Cinema.

Graham Slam! is sponsored by the EIU English Department, the College of Arts and Humanities and the Tarble Arts Center. A reception will follow the performances and awards presentation.

The event is being held in conjunction with of Celebration: A Festival of the Arts. It is free and open to the public.

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## Letter to the Editor

Dear editor: A recent objection was made that the DEN chose to publish Brian Weaver's "opinion piece" entitled "No Bunny loves you more than God." As a contradiction, it was comical that the people raising the objection call themselves "EIU Society for Free Thought." Free? Where in a decent university are the borders to freedom of expression? Weaver speaks of a God of love. Sounds like an opinion to me. Sermon or opinion? Sounds like splitting hairs, or, as Someone else put it, "You strain knats and swallow camels." So, what sermon is worthwhile that lacks opinion? Bunnies and Easter eggs are mediums whereby Eastertide can be trivialized into forgetting the immensely larger event of resurrection and 40 days of Appearances by the Resurrected One.

Sincerely,  
Leonidas H. Miller

## "LET'S GIVE THEM SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT"

Where do you think Jimmy Garoppolo will be drafted?  
**Get social**

 The Daily Eastern News

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To submit your opinion on today's topic, bring it in with identification to The DEN at 1811 Buzzard Hall or submit it electronically from the author's EIU email address to DENopinions@gmail.com by 4 p.m. today or reply to us on social media.

## Quote of the Day


"I love Micky Mouse more than any woman I have ever known."

- Walt Disney

## Write a letter to the editor

You have something to say. Knowing this, *The Daily Eastern News* provides a place for you to say it every day.

- Letters to the editor can be submitted at any time on any topic to the Opinions Editor to be published in *The Daily Eastern News*. The DEN's policy is to run all letters that are not libelous or potentially harmful. Letters to the editor can be brought in with identification to The DEN or sent to DENopinions@gmail.com.

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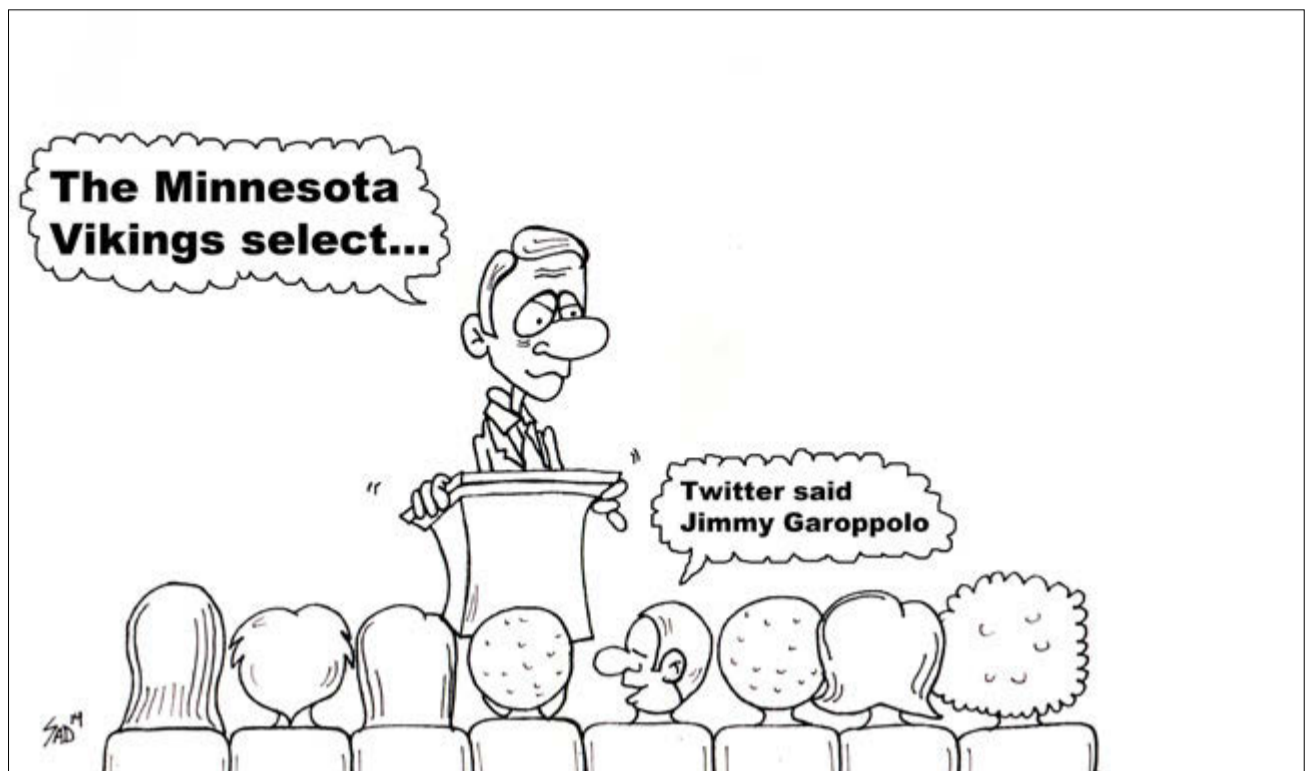
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## DRAWN FROM THE EASEL



SABRINA ANN DUNCAN | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

## STAFF EDITORIAL

# University cuts should not rely on attrition

After months of deliberation, the Council on University Planning and Budgeting recommendations have been decided, leaving the President's Council to make the final decisions.

They must decide on what areas the university needs to look at cutting to make of the \$8 million dollar difference.

But to make up the difference, the council is going to have to look much further than CUPB did when deciding where to trim down because it certainly won't make the cut.

While there is no specific total for possible savings made from the CUPB recommendations, it is clear these ideas would not reach the \$8 million.

This is terrifying not only because, this money needs to be saved, but the CUPB's hopeful reliance on attrition may foreshadow the President's Council's views on attrition, or more specifically, hiring freezes.

A significant amount of faculty and staff members have been reviewing their pensions and the ability for retirement.

There are already roughly 70 who will be

leaving with more joining everyday.

If 90 faculty members leave, it will mean 5 percent of the university staff will be gone.

Anything close to a hiring freeze is would be severely detrimental to the university and be poor decision for the success of Eastern.

We cannot have a significant amount of the workforce leave with no one to replace them.

Not only will this brutally increase the workload of returning faculty, but also academic programs will be stripped of the workforce to teach them.

Classes will disappear with no one to teach them.

Perspective students look at classes offered and expect those classes to exist throughout their college experience.

To rob them of these possible classes for the future would be dishonest and deceitful.

Not to mention, if classes disappear, perspective students or even currently enrolled students will have no interest in going or

staying at the university.

Relying on attrition should be the very last option when it comes to cuts.

Laziness should not get the better of anyone involved in cutting things from the university budget.

There were good ideas talked about in CUPB that might yield results in various ways.

Every avenue should be looked at before touching the staff that keeps this campus running.

While it is unrealistic to not expect some staff cuts, they should always be last on the chopping block.

Attrition is not the solution. It should at most be a support to help us reach the end goal of \$8 million.

The campus will get hurt, but there has to be more efficient ways of hitting the mark then attacking the faculty.

The daily editorial is the majority opinion of the editorial board of *The Daily Eastern News*.

# Social media spoils selections for NFL Draft

The NFL Draft is just a few weeks away, and obviously our eyes will be paying close attention, as one of our own, quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo, is projected as an early round selection.

Maybe it's just the quenching of the no-football-for-a-few-months thirst, but the NFL Draft is always one of my favorite days of the year. It's amazing to see the lives of a number of young athletes changing in an instant, with players realizing their dreams and taking the next step forward in their careers.

The draft is also exciting because of all the drama that follows it. Teams notorious for their draft day blunders overshoot on prospects, while other highly touted recruits turn out to be busts.

The way the draft is covered by journalists has certainly changed over the years, with seemingly Super Bowl-like coverage offered over the course of three days. Analysts like Mel Kiper Jr. and Todd McShay spend every hour of the day watching film, reading scouting reports and making their best guesses as to who fits into what system the best.



## Dominic Renzetti

Over the past few years, however, I've found that the suspense of the NFL Draft has sort of died. We know at least a few days before the commissioner steps up to the podium to announce the first pick who it's going to be. And then the next picks that follow all seemingly fall into place before the team with the number one pick is even off the clock. Twitter has pretty much spoiled the draft for me. There's no longer any anticipation that comes with who the next pick is going to be. Before half of the time is even off the clock, the pick is already in on Twitter. The anticipation then turns into, "when are they going to announce it?" rather

than "who is it?"

I, like many of you, I'm sure, have been following Garoppolo's team visits, private workouts, scouting reports, and other news about him as to where he might fall. Come draft day, I want to be surprised. I want to have that feeling of being excited when I hear a guy's name get announced, but Twitter has kind of killed all of that, as much as I love the app.

Last year, I tried to stay off my phone as much as possible during the draft, just so I could be a little bit surprised by the selections, but I'll admit, I'm addicted. I have to know. I want to know, even though it spoils it for me.

As a reporter covering Eastern sports, I feel obligated to bring you every up to the minute detail of what's happening, so come draft day, I'll definitely be tweeting about it. So, sorry in advance for spoiling the draft for you. It hurts you just as much as it hurts me.

*Dominic Renzetti is a family and consumer science major. He can be reached at 581-2812 or DENopinions@gmail.com.*

# 'Panther Pal'-ing around



DION MCNEAL | DAILY EASTERN NEWS

Larken Parr, a junior geography major, assists students to register for becoming a Panther Pal for Fall 2014. The program is driven to help students through community service by moving in other students into residence halls.

## » SPRING CONCERT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

However, both Shawna and Keifer agree there are more positives than negatives.

Shawna said the music helps them to resolve arguments.

"We'll have a little fight or something before we go on stage, and after 90 minutes or so after the show we forgot what we were fighting for," she said.

Keifer said the experience is a dream come true.

"It's a little different because you don't get any space, in a way, but in a way we don't really want it," he said. "We're best friends, so it all works out in the end."

Thompson Square will be stopping at Eastern for a performance at 8 p.m. Thursday in Lantz Arena.

Though the band has only played for a handful of colleges during the four years Thompson Square has been together, Shawna said she enjoys the high energy of college crowds.

"(We) played in Nashville for eight years playing for basically bar stools and a bar tender, so any time we can have a gathering of people who are willing to listen to what we do and have a party with us, we are excited," she said.

Some of the most rewarding stops during their tours included playing for the Navy, Air Force and Marines in Hawaii, Japan and Guam.

Shawna said playing for the military was a life-changing experience.

"The crowds were some of the most intense crowds that we've had ever," she said.

Some women expressed their gratitude because their husbands were deployed and the songs reminded them of home, and one Marine couple even got engaged on stage.

"Most of our bigger songs are romantic songs, so couples that are there that are separated from each other, you can tell that it really meant something to them when we sang the songs," Shawna said.

As the band has gained more popularity, members have heard everything from "thank you" to "you got me through a hard time" to "you saved my marriage" to "I hate you," Keifer said.

"The more popular you get, the more positive and negative stuff you get, so you just roll with all of it," he said. "But 99 percent of it is great stuff. Our music touches our fans and they touch us; it's a wonderful give-and-take relationship. We do everything we do for our fans, and if it wasn't for them, we wouldn't probably ever leave the house."

*Stephanie Markham can be reached at 581-2812 or samarkham@eiu.edu.*

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# Panthers' 11-game win streak snapped

By Kaz Darzinskis  
Staff Reporter | @DEN\_Sports

The Eastern softball team had its 11-game win streak snapped in a doubleheader against Butler Tuesday at Williams Field, losing 1-0 in the first game and 6-5 in the second game.

In the first game, senior Stephanie Maday started the game, going seven innings, she struck out seven batters and walked two.

Maday gave up the games only run in the fourth inning and surrendered one hit to the Bulldog lineup, with the loss she dropped to 15-6 on the season.

Kristin Gutierrez pitched for the Bulldogs, going seven innings. She struck out nine batters with no walks no runs and she yielded three hits to the Panther lineup.

The Bulldogs scored the lone run of the contest off a RBI fielder's choice.

Offensively for the Panthers, things were bleak during the first contest.

Bailey O'Dell and April Markowski were the only starters to register a hit off of Gutierrez, while Amber Toenyes came in to nab a pinch hit as well.

In the second game, coach Angie Nicholson utilized the flex position, she technically started Stephanie Maday, but actually utilized designated player Hannah Rachor to pitch.

This allowed Maday to be brought in at any point in the game while allowing Rachor to remain in the batting lineup.

Rachor was given her first opportunity to start this year against and she pitched six innings, gave up 12 hits with six runs, five of which were earned.

She also struck out two batters while walking two. Stephanie Maday did enter the contest in the seventh inning, where she yielded one hit in her lone inning of work.



Ashleigh Westover, senior infielder, helped her teammate corner in a runner between third and home base. The runner attempted to steal home, but got tagged out trying to return back to third.

Butler utilized two freshman pitchers in the second game, Kacey Starwalt from Mattoon, and Allie Tarrant.

Starwalt struggled early, giving up three runs in the first, but then she settled down. She pitched three innings, striking out two, walking two and surrendering two hits. Tarrant

came in and pitched four innings, giving up two runs. She yielded five hits and had five strikeouts while she walked one.

Hannah Cole led the Panther offense in the second game, as she was 2-for-3 with two runs and two RBIs.

Carly Willert was also 2-for-3 with

an RBI. The remaining seven Panthers combined for three hits and one RBI.

Eastern fell to 34-13 on the season while the Bulldogs improved to 21-24 on the season.

Eastern will host a three-game set this weekend with Ohio Valley Con-

ference foe Austin Peay.

Senior day will be celebrated on Saturday, as Eastern will play a doubleheader, with the first game set to start at 1 p.m.

**Kaz Darzinskis can be reached at 581-2812 or kcdarzinskis@eiu.edu.**

## Pole vault record broken at O'Brien

By Blake Nash  
Staff Reporter | @DEN\_Sports

Red-shirt senior Peter Geraghty's 18-feet, 2.75-inches pole vault height broke Eastern's all-time school record at O'Brien Field in the Eastern Tuesday Tweener.

His height of 18'2.75", in the pole vault, broke his teammate Mick Viken's school record, which he set last spring. Geraghty's height also broke the O'Brien Field record.

On Saturday, Geraghty became only the second athlete in Eastern history to break the 18-foot mark in the pole vault. He also won that event at Southern Illinois-Edwardsville with a height of 18'0.50" on Saturday.

The rest of the Eastern track and field team posted 16 first-place finishes over Indiana State in the two-team dual Tuesday. A pair of Panthers also found their way onto the school's top -10 list in the 100-meter dash and the high jump, respectively.

Kaleel Johnson's time of 10.53 seconds advanced him into the school's all-time list at number eight. Kailey James' throw of 130'6" also landed her eighth on the school's all-time list in the women's javelin for Eastern.

The wins did not stop there for Eastern in the throwing events. Garrett Jensen and Janie Howse were victorious in the discus competition, resulting in a sweep. Jensen's won his event with a mark of 158'11", while Howse won her competition with a mark of 138'5".

Another sweep for the Panthers took place in the 800-meter races. Ephraim Dorsey and Kristen Paris won those races,

with Dorsey winning his at a time of 1:53.54 and Paris with a time of 2:14.55.

Eastern also swept the women's long distance races, as Cassy Shaffer and Rachel Garippo won their respective events.

Shaffer won the steeplechase with a time of 11:50.45 and Garippo won the 5,000-meter race, with a time of 18:04.93.

In other running events, Danny Trevor took first place in the 110-meter hurdles with a time of 14.67. His teammate, Justine Moore, also won the women's 100-meter hurdles with a time of 14.40.

In other running action, Amina Jackson won the women's 400-meter hurdles with a time of 1:03.39. Briana Walker won the last race for the Panthers, with a time of 25:19 in the 200-meter dash.

In men's field action, Eastern came away victorious in three events, with winning performances by David Johansson, Aviance King and Kendall Williams. Johansson won the hammer throw with a mark of 168'10". King won the high jump with a height of 6'6", while Williams won the triple jump, with a mark of 44'6.75".

Eastern's next action will come at the Drake Relays Invitational that begin Thursday and marks one of the biggest regular-season meets of the year for the Panthers. Only those who qualified for the meet received an invitation to compete, including Calvin Edwards, Geraghty, Viken and Jalissa Paramore for Eastern.

**Blake Nash can be reached at 581-2812 or banash@eiu.edu**

## Eastern falls in Champaign

By Aldo Soto  
Assistant Sports Editor | @AldoSoto21

Demetre Taylor and Brant Valach both reached base safely to start the ninth inning, but after Taylor was throw out at third base following a sacrifice-bunt attempt, two Eastern baseball players struck out, as the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign held on to win 3-2 at Illinois Field.

The Panthers only had three hits heading into the final inning, as Illinois starter Rob McDonald pitched five innings, allowing two hits and two runs, picking up his thirteenth win of the season, improving to 3-0.

Eastern dropped to 12-28 this season and fell to 6-20 away from home, as

Jason Goldstein led the Illinois offense, driving in two runs for the Illini.

Eastern had five base runners total against McDonald and Andrew Mamlic, who pitched three innings out of the Illini bullpen, heading into the ninth inning trailing 3-2.

Taylor hit a groundball to Illinois shortstop Adam Walton, who could not handle the ball, allowing Eastern's left-fielder reach base to start the ninth.

After Valach singled to right field, Cameron Berra attempted to move the runners over to second and third base, but his bunt was fielded by Illinois' closer Tyler Jay, who threw over to Reid Roper at third base.

Taylor was out at third base, but Eastern still had runners at first and second

base, with one out, still down by a run.

Tyler Schweigert, who drove in Valach in the fourth inning with a sacrifice fly was due up next, but he struck out, leaving Trey Russell as the Panthers' last chance to tie the game or take the lead.

Jay only needed four pitches to strike out Russell, leaving the tying and go-ahead runs on base.

Jaden Widdersheim started for Eastern and pitched 2.2 innings, allowing three runs on three hits.

Illinois took a 3-1 lead in the third inning, when Walton hit a ground-rule double to right field that drove in Kelly Norris-Jones that was followed by Goldstein's RBI-groundout.

**Aldo Soto can be reached at 581-2812 or asoto2@eiu.edu.**

### » PARRISH CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

His parents grew more accepting of Austin being gay. But a year and a half later, his father was diagnosed with Viral Herpes Simplicis Encephalitis, the virus that causes cold sores to flare up.

For Bill, however, the virus entered his blood stream and infected his brain, causing his frontal tissue to swell up and put pressure on his frontal lobes.

Bill suffered short-term memory loss — forgetting the number of kids he had, let alone that his oldest son was gay.

Austin said Bill also lost a large portion of his motor skills. The once outgoing, conversational father he had, whom Austin took after, was

now quiet and reserved.

"There's maybe 10-20 words exchanged between us when I go home," Austin said.

This time, Austin made the decision to again not tell his father that he was gay. Bill eventually caught on, but actually confronted his son about it, Austin said.

"It wasn't as difficult the second time because he never fully understood it," Austin said. "He tries to not acknowledge it now. He pushes it aside."

As for his mother, Austin said the two are closer now than they have ever been before.

The two talk every day, as he makes it a point to send a text or make a

phone call back home.

At the last meet of Panthers' 2014 season at Eastern, the Summit League Championships on Feb. 19 in Indianapolis, Ind., Cindy was there to see her son.

Austin's mother watched from the bleachers, as he achieved career highs in the 200-yard breaststroke, 400-yard individual medley and the mile freestyle.

"She is going to support me, no matter what, in everything I do," Austin said. "It means so much to know that she still cares."

**Anthony Catezone can be reached at 581-2812 or ajcatezone@eiu.edu.**





DOMINIC BAIMA | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

Freshman freestyle swimmer Austin Parrish told his parents he was gay in April of 2011. Parrish, from Pendleton Heights, Ind., finished with career highs in the 200-yard breaststroke, 400-yard individual medley and the mile freestyle at the 2014 Summit League Championships.

# BREAKING THE SILENCE

## Eastern swimmer comes out to parents

By **Anthony Catezone**  
Sports Editor | @AnthonyCatz

*Editor's note: This is the third installment in a series about Eastern athletes in the offseason of their sport.*

Austin Parrish sat in the living room of his home in Pendleton, Ind., across from his mother, Cindy, who had no idea what her son was about to tell her.

"I need to tell you something, but I don't know how you'll react," Austin said to his mother. "I just need to know that you're going to be there for me and love me no matter what."

Cindy assured Austin that she would love him no matter what.

"That's when I began to choke up and I wasn't able to talk," Parrish said.

Finally, on a Tuesday in April 2011, a 16-year-old Austin, now a freshman on Eastern's swim team, was able to muster up the strength to declare what he had been contemplating since he was in fourth grade.

"I'm not attracted to girls," Austin said to his mother. "I'm attracted to the same sex. I find guys to be more attractive than girls."

Austin told his mother he was gay.

Cindy sat silently for several seconds — for what seemed like an eternity to her son — before she fled the living room in tears and bolted up

stairs to her bedroom.

She locked the door. Austin sat alone.

His mother came from a strict religious background.

For that reason, to this day, Cindy's side of the family is unaware that he is gay.

Therefore, he foresaw such a reaction from her, but nonetheless he was not prepared for the magnitude of witnessing it in person.

"Seeing her cry upset me," he said. "I felt like I let her down; I can no longer make her proud."

For 10 minutes, Austin sat alone in his living room.

His mother finally came back downstairs where she began to ask a series of "general" questions: Why do you think this? Are you sure? How do you think this? Are you sure? How do you think this?

"Just the typical questions asked when a person comes out," Austin said. "I told her what it was, 'girls, I just see them as friends. I don't see myself being married to one or having a relationship with one. That's simply just that.'"

Silence flooded the room once again. Parrish apologized to his mother for upsetting her.

"She didn't really say anything," Austin said. "She kind of just got up and left."

Lack of interaction continued be-

**"After seeing [my mother's] initial reaction, I was scared she would disown me and want nothing to do with me."**

-Austin Parrish, Eastern swimmer

tween Austin and his mother for the next month.

Austin said he would go to school at Pendleton Heights High School, go to swim practice, come home and go straight to his room.

Austin shut out everybody. Diners were silent. The silence was drowning his life.

"It was that awkward feeling, that elephant in the room," Austin said. "It's there, but nobody addressed it."

Nobody addressed Austin being gay because his father, Bill, still did not know.

His younger brother, Tyler, had caught on.

He told his two older sisters, Christina and Katie, two days before he told his mother.

Each of his siblings accepted the reality, Austin said.

For his mother it was not so easy. And for his father, Austin knew he would have a similar, if not worse, reaction. So Austin put off the unbearable task of coming out to his father.

"Every so often, my mom would

tell me, 'you need to tell your dad,'" Austin said. "I would just say, 'I can't. I just can't do that.'"

Growing up, Austin's father, Bill, was the stricter parent and was seen as the authoritative figure in the family.

"I knew what made him tick and what would upset him," Austin said.

Austin said he knew that telling his father he was gay would undoubtedly upset him, so he elected not to do so.

Austin refused to tell his father. His mother refused to keep it from his father any longer, so she eventually told him. Austin was not present when his father found out.

Bill addressed Austin about being gay a couple days later and told his son that he might simply be confused. But Austin knew he was not.

"These are my feelings," Austin said. "I can't change them."

Still, Austin's parents asked him to see a therapist, to which he refused at first.

Eventually, Austin's parents convinced him that seeing a therapist was best for them to understand how

he felt.

Austin said it was pretty much he went to one session or his parents would not accept him being gay.

Austin was willing, under the impression that he would be the only person in therapist's office. However, since he was not a legal adult, his mother had to accompany him.

Austin was forced to answer questions that he did not want to have either of his parents hear at the time: Why he thought men were more attractive? Did he think his mother would never talk to him again?

"After seeing her initial reaction, I was scared she would disown me and want nothing to do with me," Austin said he told the therapist.

Again, Cindy burst into tears.

"You're my own flesh and blood," Austin said his mother told him. "I can't just throw you aside. You're the same person you were yesterday; you're just not living a lie anymore."

Still, Austin was not comfortable with talking to the therapist.

He attended the one session his parents asked, and he was done. He threatened his parents if he had to go again, he would move to live with a friend or one of his sisters.

"They never made me go again," Austin said.

**PARRISH, page 7**